

Waterstones Booksellers Limited

Modern Slavery Statement for financial year ending 24 April 2021

Introduction

This statement is made pursuant to section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the “MSA”) on behalf of Waterstones Booksellers Limited, a private limited company registered in England and Wales with registered company number 00610095. This statement has been approved by the board of directors.

The challenges brought by the COVID-19 global pandemic arguably have increased the risk of modern slavery in supply chains. In order to mitigate the risks associated with the pandemic we have, to the extent possible, maintained our existing suppliers and have not established relationships with any material suppliers during this period.

We are committed to acting responsibly and with integrity in all our business relationships and we continue to take measures to implement and enforce effective systems and processes to ensure that modern slavery and human trafficking is not taking place anywhere within our control or influence.

Our business

Waterstones is a leading retailer of books, stationery and other related products from its shops in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey, Holland and Belgium and online from its website at www.waterstones.com. We also sell coffee and food from a number of cafés within our shops, arrange and host public and private events within our shops, and support a large number of literary festivals. Our internet business, distribution centre, customer support team and head offices are all based in the UK.

Our staff

We are committed to creating a working environment that is open, inclusive, supportive, that is based on mutual respect and trust and where everyone feels valued. Our Dignity at Work policy demonstrates our ambition for our staff to enjoy a working environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation. This policy covers all employees, contractors, temporary workers and prospective employees. It applies to all aspects of employment, from recruitment and selection through to leaving the business.

We have robust internal policies and processes in place to uphold and protect the rights and working conditions of our staff, to ensure that all employees are safe, of working age, and that we are complying with the provisions of the MSA. These policies are communicated to staff during onboarding and are easily accessible through the company’s intranet.

As well as our Dignity at Work policy and policies covering matters such as recruitment and hours of work, we maintain a Whistleblowing Policy which allows staff to identify and report any potential concerns to appropriate managers or senior officers of the business without fear or threat of reprisal or detrimental treatment.

Our supply chains

Our supply chains include a wide range of suppliers of books, stationery, coffee, food and other related products. We operate zero tolerance to slavery and human trafficking within our business. We expect all those in our supply chains to comply with our values. Suppliers of physical goods are required to comply with our Supplier Manual, which requires information to be submitted for initial supplier set up and due diligence purposes and incorporates our standard terms and conditions of purchase.

We continue to assess our supply contracts by size and risk profile and continue to, wherever possible and commercially viable, purchase goods and services from established suppliers in the UK. We expect such suppliers to have suitable anti-slavery and human trafficking policies and processes in place. We also expect, at the very least, the adoption of 'one up/down' due diligence.

A majority of products that we buy are processed through our central distribution centre in the UK, which is fully managed on our behalf by a well-established third party company, also registered and based in the UK.

We purchase a wide range of professional and operational services as would be expected of a large retailer, such as legal, accountancy, information technology, insurance, property, cleaning, catering, maintenance and other such services from time to time. These relationships are governed by written supply contracts which we aim to ensure are fair and balanced and include responsibilities for compliance.

We acknowledge our responsibility to be alert to the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking in our supply chains. We consider the risks in our current supply chains to be low, based on the location of the majority of our suppliers and product/service categories that we purchase. Nevertheless, we continue to monitor and develop our responsibilities in this regard, as appropriate.

Training

We make training available to relevant members of staff to improve and develop our knowledge on this subject, with particular focus on our human resources, logistics and buying teams. This statement is accessible to all and, the Company directors are aware of and have received training in order to understand their responsibilities and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the MSA.

Conclusion

This statement reflects the steps that Waterstones Booksellers Limited has taken during its financial year ending 24 April 2021 to ensure that slavery and human trafficking are not taking place in its own business or wider supply chain. We are committed to the continuous improvement of our knowledge and efforts in eradicating modern slavery.

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several stylized, connected strokes.

James Daunt

Managing Director

For and on behalf of Waterstones Booksellers Limited

Dated: 13-Apr-21